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for

**POUCH CONTAINERS HAVING ADVERTISING MEDIA AND METHODS FOR
THEIR DISSEMINATION**

by

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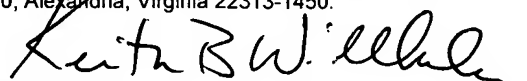
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Keith B. Willhelm

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to pouch containers for products and to methods for disseminating advertising messages, and more particularly, to improved pouch containers having separable advertising media and to methods for disseminating advertising messages to consumers via such improved pouch containers.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Advertisers have relied on many different ways to deliver advertising messages. For example, many advertisements are delivered through broadcast mass media, such as radio and television, or through printed mass media, such as magazines and newspapers. Direct advertising is another popular and often highly effective method because messages are delivered directly to a defined population of consumers. In addition to direct mail and e-mails, other direct advertising methods include dimensional mail, catalogs, inserts in bills and other mailings.

Despite the many different media available to advertisers, however, there is a continuing need to develop effective, cost efficient methods of advertising. For example, while distribution by broadcast media is relatively inexpensive, the cost of producing entertainment, news and other content for broadcast media can be extremely expensive, and those costs are reflected in advertising fees. Content production costs for printed mass media also can be substantial, and printed mass media can be expensive to produce and distribute. While most direct advertising contains little or no content beyond the advertising message, and thus, involves relatively low content cost, the cost of direct advertising nevertheless can be substantial. Such costs typically include the generation of a mailing list and postage or other delivery costs.

Moreover, a substantial portion if not the majority of all advertising messages are never viewed by their intended audience for one reason or another. Many consumers receiving the advertisement may have no interest in the advertised good or service, or they may not be able to afford it. There also is a general clutter of advertisements that makes it difficult for a particular ad to capture the attention of consumers, especially if the consumer is distracted or otherwise occupied when the opportunity for viewing the ad arises.

1 For example, response rates for radio and television advertising typically is under
2 1%. Although inserts in newspapers and magazines commonly have somewhat higher
3 response rates on the order of 1-2%, newspaper and magazine advertisements also have
4 very low response rates, usually under 1%. Direct mail, catalogs, and e-mails have
5 average response rates around 2%. The response rates for all of these methods, however,
6 are greatly reduced because the vast majority of the ads are never viewed. For example,
7 most direct mailings are thrown away without ever being opened. Likewise, from 85 to
8 99% of e-mailings are never opened.

9 Thus, most advertising methods are very inefficient and wasteful. The effective
10 cost for each advertising message that is actually communicated to consumers, therefore,
11 is generally many times higher than the nominal cost per message. Thus, despite, and in
12 part because of the number and variety of conventional methods, advertisers continue to
13 seek more cost effective ways of disseminating advertising messages.

14 Some methods of direct advertising that have shown both significant promise and
15 significant shortcomings utilize the product itself as a distribution vehicle. For example,
16 in "cross ruffing" a noncompetitive product is used as the vehicle to distribute a coupon,
17 sample, or other sales promotion offer for another product. Coupons, premiums, and
18 rebates toward the purchase of the same or another product also are attached to or
19 included in product packaging as part of so-called "bounce back" offers. That is,
20 packaging for products has long presented advertising messages relating to the products
21 that are contained therein along with whatever other product information that may be
22 required by law. More recently, however, products have been distributed in packaging
23 that includes and presents advertising messages and incentives for products other than
24 that contained in the package or that will incentivize the consumer to purchase more of
25 the same product. The messages typically have been imprinted on the packaging itself,
26 carried in the packaging along with the product, or removably affixed to the packaging.

27 Cross ruffing and bounce back advertising messages on carrier products have a
28 significant cost advantage over other forms of direct advertising because the distribution
29 of such messages is in a sense nearly cost free. That is, other than the cost of printing or
30 otherwise preparing the advertising message itself, there is little incremental cost in

1 disseminating cross ruffed and bounce back advertising messages over and above the cost
2 of producing and distributing the carrier products themselves.

3 Accordingly, cross ruffed and bounce back advertising messages on certain
4 products have become common, for example, on cereal packaging. Many people place
5 the box on the table while they eat breakfast cereals. Although they may be reading a
6 newspaper, televisions may be on, or there may be other activities diverting their
7 attention, this provides a greater opportunity for consumers to view advertising messages
8 carried on or in cereal packaging. Accordingly, advertising messages carried on cereal
9 packaging can have a higher view rate than other forms of direct advertising.

10 Despite the advantages of presenting an advertising message directly to a target
11 audience, and despite its significant cost advantage over other forms of direct advertising,
12 the type of products and packaging utilized to carry cross ruffed and bounce back
13 advertising messages has been limited. In some instances this may be because certain
14 products are not consumed under circumstances conducive to viewing of advertising
15 messages. In other instances advertisers may fail to appreciate the opportunities created
16 during consumption of the product. On the other hand, some products are consumed
17 under circumstances that appear to provide ideal environments for delivering an
18 advertising message, yet their use as carrier products has been extremely limited or non-
19 existent.

20 Fortune cookies, for example, have a message slip baked into the cookie that is
21 almost universally viewed, thus ensuring that any advertising message carried thereon
22 would be effectively delivered as well. The relatively small size of traditional fortune
23 cookie inserts, however, does not provide space for delivering much more than a branding
24 type message, and fortune cookie inserts to date have proven unsuitable for delivering
25 more extensive and sophisticated advertising messages.

26 Many so called "single-serve" food products are consumed under circumstances
27 that also appear to provide favorable environments for presenting consumers with an
28 opportunity to view advertising messages. Such single-serve products include a variety of
29 condiments, such as sugar, sugar substitutes, ketchup, relish, and sauces, which are
30 provided to consumers in restaurants, concessions, institutions, and other food service

1 outlets. Such consumers frequently have many opportunities to view advertising
2 messages while they are waiting for their food or eating it.

3 To date, however, single-serve products have not been used or used effectively as
4 vehicles to deliver advertising messages. One of the most common types of packaging
5 for such products is so-called “pouch” or “sachet” containers. They are fabricated from
6 sheets of various papers and films that are formed most commonly into generally
7 rectangular “pillow” shapes, the interior volume of which holds the product. They are
8 commonly divided into two general types: three and four-sided seals.

9 Three-sided seal pouch containers comprise a single, generally rectangular sheet
10 that is folded in half. Seals are then formed in what may be viewed as the top and side
11 edges of the pouch, those three seals and the fold defining a sealed volume in which
12 product is disposed. There also are “wrap” style three-sided seal pouches. Such pouches
13 comprise a generally rectangular sheet that is folded twice. Seals are formed in two
14 opposing side edges. The third seal is formed on one of the faces, as opposed to the edge,
15 of the pouch. Four-sided seal pouch containers comprise two, superimposed, generally
16 rectangular sheets that are sealed together on all four edges. In addition to the most
17 common pillow shape, there are also gusset bottom and stand-up pouch containers, and
18 extensions from the top of pouch containers have been provided with holes to facilitate
19 display of the packaged product.

20 The sheets from which pouch containers are fabricated typically are composed of
21 an imprintable substrate that is well suited for presenting advertising and information
22 relating to the packaged product. To date, however, pouch containers, especially those
23 used to package single-serve food products, have not been used extensively, if at all, as
24 carriers for cross ruffed and bounce back advertising messages.

25 One problem is that the serving size of many of products is relatively small,
26 meaning that the pouch container for such products also is relatively small. For example,
27 sugar packets typically are approximately 1.75” by 3.75”, or somewhat smaller. Ketchup
28 packets and packets for other sauces typically are approximately 2.0” by 3.75”, or
29 somewhat smaller. There is a limited amount of imprintable space, much of which must
30 be devoted to product information required by law or good business practice. Typically

1 any advertising messages are limited to relatively simple branding messages and such
2 messages usually pertain to the packaged product. There is very little room for more
3 sophisticated and complex advertising messages that are essential to successful marketing
4 campaigns.

5 In particular, many products, such as food and consumer household products, are
6 promoted extensively using manufacturer coupons. Such coupons typically offer a
7 discount on specifically identified products and are distributed to consumers through
8 various media such as newspapers and direct mailings. Consumers may redeem the
9 coupons with merchants selling the product. The merchants in turn are reimbursed by the
10 manufacturer or distributor of the product. The vast majority of manufacturer coupons
11 are redeemed by merchants through a clearing house such as NCH Marketing Services,
12 Deerfield, Illinois. The automated processing of such manufacturer coupons essentially
13 requires that they incorporate machine readable indicia, such as UPC bar codes utilizing
14 the UCC/EAN-128 Article Numbering System. Information on standards for
15 manufacturer coupons is publicly available, for example, through Uniform Code Council,
16 Inc., Lawrenceville, New Jersey, and through Grocery Manufacturers of America, Inc.,
17 Washington, D.C.

18 Manufacturer coupons have been distributed using various types of product
19 packaging as a carrier. For example, such coupons commonly are carried inside or
20 imprinted on carton containers used to package cereal and other food products. The
21 carton containers for such products typically are quite large and can easily accommodate
22 manufacturer coupons. Many pouch containers commonly used in packaging single-serve
23 products, however, are as a practical matter too small to accommodate a bar code and
24 even minimal product identification as is required to produce a consumer redeemable,
25 manufacturer coupon.

26 An object of this invention, therefore, is to provide improved methods for directly
27 disseminating advertising messages to consumers of food and other types of products and
28 improved packaging for products providing a medium for delivery of advertising
29 messages.

It also is an object to provide such improved methods and packaging capable of delivering more extensive and sophisticated advertising messages, such as redeemable manufacturer coupons, especially such methods and packaging that may be used to advantage in single-serve food products.

Another object of this invention is to provide improved packaging having increased imprintable surface area, and especially such packaging that may be used to advantage in single-serve food products.

It also is a more specific object of the subject invention to provide improved pouch packaging, and especially pouch packaging for single-serve and other relatively small pouch packages, that is capable of delivering more extensive and sophisticated advertising messages, such as redeemable manufacturer coupons.

Yet another object is to provide such improved packaging that may be produced by conventional machinery and processes with little or no modification.

It is a further object of this invention to provide such methods and packaging wherein all of the above-mentioned advantages are realized.

Those and other objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawings.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The subject invention provides for improved methods of disseminating advertising messages to consumers. The methods comprise providing novel pouch packages for products that are constructed in accordance with the subject invention and selected from the groups consisting of any or all of the novel packages. The packaged product with the advertising message is distributed to a consumer outlet and then to consumers associated with the consumer outlet. Preferably, the product is a single-serve food product which is distributed to food service establishments.

The novel pouch packages provided for by the subject invention comprise one or more flexible imprintable substrate sheets. The substrate sheets comprise collectively one or more pouch sections defining a sealed volume accommodating a product therein and a message section providing a substrate on which a message may be imprinted. The pouch

1 sections are provided on one or more of the substrate sheets. The messages section is
2 provided on one of the same substrate sheets or another substrate sheet. The message
3 section is connected to at least one of the pouch sections defining the sealed volume, but
4 is separable from the pouch sections without compromising the integrity of the sealed
5 volume. Thus, the advertising message may be removed from the sealed volume and
6 viewed by a consumer.

7 The novel pouch containers comprise various embodiments, including pouch
8 containers wherein the message section extends from one or more of the seals defining
9 the pouch and where the message section is laminated or otherwise affixed to a face of
10 the pouch. Other preferred embodiments comprise single-serve, especially single-serve
11 food products packaged in the novel containers, and novel containers having relatively
12 small pouches, but with significantly greater area available for imprinting advertising
13 messages. The novel pouch containers also include preferred embodiments having a
14 manufacturer coupon imprinted on the message section that is redeemable by a consumer
15 of the packaged product and that has imprinted thereon machine readable indicia to
16 facilitate automated processing of the coupon. Preferably the machine readable indicia
17 are a UPC bar code utilizing the UCC/EAN-128 Article Numbering System or another
18 bar code.

19 It will be appreciated that products when packaged in the novel pouch containers
20 will occupy substantially the same space as when they are packaged in conventional
21 pouch containers, yet the novel packaging will provide significantly greater area on which
22 advertising messages may be imprinted. Moreover, by increasing the imprintable area of
23 the packaging without significantly increasing the overall size of the packaged product,
24 more extensive and sophisticated advertising messages may be provided even in
25 relatively small pouch containers. In particular, the novel containers, even when they are
26 sized to package relatively small single-serve products such as sugar and sauces, have
27 sufficient imprintable surface area to accommodate a manufacturer coupon, including the
28 requisite product information and machine readable bar code used in systems that manage
29 accounting between coupon issuers and merchants. It also will be appreciated that the
30 cost of providing message sections in the novel pouch containers is minimal compared to

1 the value of the advertising and that the advertising messages may be effectively
2 disseminated for little incremental cost over the normal costs of producing and
3 distributing the packaged product.

4 Finally, the subject invention provides for methods for disseminating advertising
5 messages to a target consumer group. The methods comprise packaging a product in a
6 pouch container having associated therewith an advertising message pertaining to
7 products or services other than the packaged product, the advertising message being
8 intended for a target consumer group. The packaged product is then packaged in a
9 shipping carton having a machine readable indicator uniquely associated with the
10 advertising message. The indicator is read and the carton is then shipped to consumer
11 outlets associated with the target consumer group. Preferably, the product is a single-
12 serve food product which is distributed to food service establishments.

13 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

14 **FIGURE 1** is a top plan view of a first preferred embodiment **10** of the pouch
15 containers of the subject invention, which container **10** comprises two separable
16 imprintable message sections extending from the top seal of a three-sided seal pouch and
17 providing media for advertising messages;

18 **FIG. 2** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **10** shown in **FIG. 1**
19 taken along line **2-2** thereof showing the construction of container **10**;

20 **FIG. 3** is a top plan view of a web **12** from which the novel container **10** may be
21 fabricated;

22 **FIG. 4** is a top plan view of a second preferred embodiment **20** of the pouch
23 containers of the subject invention, which container **20** comprises a separable imprintable
24 message section extending from the bottom seal of a three-sided seal pouch and providing
25 media for advertising messages;

26 **FIG. 5** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **20** shown in **FIG. 4**
27 taken along line **5-5** thereof showing the construction of container **20**;

28 **FIG. 6** is a top plan view of a web **22** from which the novel container **20** may be
29 fabricated;

1 **FIG. 7** is a top plan view of a third preferred embodiment **30** of the pouch
2 containers of the subject invention, which container **30** comprises two separable
3 imprintable message sections extending from a side seal of a three-sided seal pouch and
4 providing media for advertising messages;

5 **FIG. 8** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **30** shown in **FIG. 7**
6 taken along line **8-8** thereof showing the construction of container **30**;

7 **FIG. 9** is a top plan view of a web **32** from which the novel container **30** may be
8 fabricated;

9 **FIG. 10** is a top plan view of a fourth preferred embodiment **40** of the pouch
10 containers of the subject invention, which container **40** comprises two separable
11 imprintable message sections extending from a face seal of a wrap-style three-sided seal
12 pouch and providing media for advertising messages;

13 **FIG. 11** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **40** shown in **FIG.**
14 **10** taken along line **11-11** thereof showing the construction of container **40**;

15 **FIG. 12** is a top plan view of a web **42** from which the novel container **40** may be
16 fabricated;

17 **FIG. 13** is a top plan view of a fifth preferred embodiment **50** of the pouch
18 containers of the subject invention, which container **50** comprises two separable
19 imprintable message sections extending from an end seal of a wrap-style three-sided seal
20 pouch and providing media for advertising messages;

21 **FIG. 14** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **50** shown in **FIG.**
22 **13** taken along line **14-14** thereof showing the construction of container **50**;

23 **FIG. 15** is a top plan view of a web **52** from which the novel container **50** may be
24 fabricated;

25 **FIG. 16** is a top plan view of a sixth preferred embodiment **60** of the pouch
26 containers of the subject invention, which container **60** comprises two separable
27 imprintable message sections extending from a seal of a four-sided seal pouch and
28 providing media for advertising messages;

29 **FIG. 17** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **60** shown in **FIG.**
30 **16** taken along line **17-17** thereof showing the construction of container **60**;

1 **FIG. 18** is a top plan view of a web **62** from which the novel container **60** may be
2 fabricated;

3 **FIG. 19** is a top plan view, partially torn-away, of a seventh preferred
4 embodiment **70** of the pouch containers of the subject invention, which container **70**
5 comprises a separable imprintable message sheet affixed to a face side of a three-sided
6 seal pouch and providing media for advertising messages;

7 **FIG. 20** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **70** shown in **FIG.**
8 **19** taken along line **20-20** thereof showing the construction of container **70**;

9 **FIG. 21** is a top plan view of a web **75** from which the message sheet of novel
10 container **70** may be fabricated;

11 **FIG. 22** is a top plan view of a web **72** from which the pouch of novel container
12 **70** may be fabricated;

13 **FIG. 23** is a top plan view of a eighth preferred embodiment **80** of the pouch
14 containers of the subject invention, which container **80** comprises a separable imprintable
15 message sheet affixed to a face side of a wrap-style, three-sided seal pouch and providing
16 media for advertising messages;

17 **FIG. 24** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **80** shown in **FIG.**
18 **23** taken along line **24-24** thereof showing the construction of container **80**;

19 **FIG. 25** is a top plan view of a web **85** from which the message sheet of novel
20 container **80** may be fabricated;

21 **FIG. 26** is a top plan view of a web **82** from which the pouch of novel container
22 **80** may be fabricated;

23 **FIG. 27** is a top plan view, partially torn-away, of a ninth preferred embodiment
24 **90** of the pouch containers of the subject invention, which container **90** comprises a
25 separable imprintable message sheet laminated to the face sides of a three-sided seal
26 pouch and providing media for advertising messages;

27 **FIG. 28** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **90** shown in **FIG.**
28 **27** taken along line **28-28** thereof showing the construction of container **90**;

29 **FIG. 29** is a top plan view, partially torn-away, of a web **92** from which the pouch
30 of novel container **90** may be fabricated;

1 **FIG. 30** is a top plan view, partially torn-away, of a tenth preferred embodiment
2 **100** of the pouch containers of the subject invention, which container **100** comprises a
3 separable imprintable message sheet laminated to each face side of a four-sided seal
4 pouch and providing media for advertising messages;

5 **FIG. 31** is a cross-sectional view of the novel pouch container **100** shown in **FIG.**
6 **30** taken along line **31-31** thereof showing the construction of container **100**; and

7 **FIG. 32** is a top plan view, partially torn-away, of a web **102** from which the
8 pouch of novel container **100** may be fabricated.

9 **DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS**

10 The subject invention is directed to product packaged in improved pouch
11 containers. The improved pouch containers comprise one or more flexible imprintable
12 substrate sheets. Collectively, the substrate sheets comprise one or more pouch sections
13 that define a sealed volume accommodating a product. The pouch sections are be
14 provided on one or more of the substrate sheets. The substrate sheets also provide a
15 message section. The message section provides a substrate on which a message may be
16 imprinted. The message section is provided on one of the substrate sheets, either on a
17 separate substrate sheet or on one of the substrate sheets having a pouch section, and is
18 connected to at least one of the pouch sections. It is separable from the pouch sections
19 without compromising the integrity of the sealed volume, whereby a message, such as an
20 advertising message, may be removed from the container and viewed by a consumer.

21 Various preferred embodiments of the novel invention include a product packaged
22 in a pouch container comprising a flexible imprintable substrate sheet. The substrate
23 sheet comprises one or more pouch sections and at least one message section adjacent to a
24 pouch section. The substrate sheet is folded such that the boundaries of the pouch
25 sections overlap. The boundaries of the pouch sections are sealed together to define a
26 sealed volume accommodating the product therein with the message section extending
27 from a sealed boundary of the pouch sections. The message section provides a substrate
28 on which an advertising message may be imprinted and viewed by a consumer of the
29 product, and it is separable from the pouch sections and the sealed volume defined by the
30 pouch section without compromising the integrity of the sealed volume.

1 For example, and in accordance with a first preferred embodiment, the novel
2 pouch container is fabricated from a flexible imprintable substrate sheet comprising a
3 single, rectangular pouch section and a message section extending from a boundary
4 thereof. The substrate sheet is folded in half along a line passing through the pouch
5 section parallel to the boundary from which the message section extends to provide two
6 rectangular, overlaid folds. The boundaries of the pouch section are sealed to define a
7 generally rectangular-shaped sealed volume having a top seal opposite the fold line and
8 side seals. The message section extends from the top seal of the sealed volume opposite
9 the fold line.

10 An example of this first preferred embodiment is shown in **FIGS. 1-3**, and may be
11 viewed as an improvement on conventional pillow-shaped three-sided seal pouch
12 containers. As will be appreciated from **FIGS. 1-3**, container **10** comprises a single sheet
13 **11** that preferably is fabricated from a continuous web **12** providing a plurality of sheets
14 **11** defined by seal-cut lines **13**. Each sheet **11** has a pouch section **14** bounded by seal-
15 cut lines **13** and seal lines **15**. Each sheet **11** also has two message sections **16** bounded
16 by seal-cut lines **13**, seal lines **15**, and the edges of web **12**.

17 Web **12** is folded along longitudinal fold line **17** passing through pouch sections
18 **14** such that the two halves thereof are generally overlaid. It will be understood that
19 longitudinal is a reference to a direction running generally along the length of the web **12**,
20 while transverse references a direction generally perpendicular thereto and running across
21 the width of the web. Thus folded, it will be appreciated that the boundaries of the pouch
22 sections **14** overlap, *i.e.* seal-cut lines **13** are folded over on themselves and the top and
23 bottom seal lines **15** are brought together. The folded web **12** is then sealed along seal-
24 cut lines **13**, or at least that portion of seal-cut lines **13** extending between seal lines **15**,
25 and product is inserted into the open pouches formed thereby. After product is inserted,
26 web **12**, *i.e.*, the open pouches formed in web **12**, is sealed along seal lines **15**. The pouch
27 sections **14** are thereby sealed along their boundaries and, as seen best in **FIG. 2**, define
28 sealed volumes **18** in which product (shown schematically) is disposed. Thereafter, the
29 folded and sealed web **12** is cut along seal-cut lines **13** to provide a plurality of individual
30 containers **10** having a top seal (opposite the fold) and two side seals.

1 It will be appreciated that the container **10** thereby includes two message sections
2 **16** extending upward from the top seal of the pouch **18**. Perforations **19**, as shown in
3 **FIG. 1**, may be provided at or near seal lines **15** to allow the message sections to be more
4 easily separable from the pouch **18**. Alternatively, if perforations are not provided, the
5 message sections may be torn or cut from the pouch **18** and a tear notch or imprinted cut
6 lines may be provided for such purposes.

7 As a further example, and in accordance with a second preferred embodiment, the
8 novel pouch container is fabricated from a flexible imprintable substrate sheet comprising
9 two rectangular pouch sections and a message section extending between the pouch
10 sections. The substrate sheet is folded in half along a line passing through the message
11 section such that the two pouch sections overlay each other. The boundaries of the pouch
12 section are sealed to define a generally rectangular-shaped sealed volume having a top,
13 bottom, and side seals, the bottom seal being proximate to the fold line. The message
14 section extends from the bottom seal of the sealed volume.

15 An example of this second preferred embodiment is shown in **FIGS. 4-6**, and it
16 also may be viewed as an improvement on conventional pillow-shaped three-sided seal
17 pouch containers. As will be appreciated from **FIGS. 4-6**, container **20** comprises a
18 single sheet **21** that preferably is fabricated from a continuous web **22** providing a
19 plurality of sheets **21** defined by seal-cut lines **23**. Each sheet **21** has two pouch sections
20 **24** bounded by seal-cut lines **23**, seal lines **25**, and the edges of web **22**. Each sheet **21**
21 also has a message section **26** bounded by seal-cut lines **23** and seal lines **25**.

22 Web **22** is folded along fold line **27** passing through message sections **26** such that
23 the two halves thereof are generally overlaid and the boundaries of the pouch sections **24**
24 overlap. The folded web **22** is then sealed along seal lines **25** and along seal-cut lines **23**,
25 or at least along the length of seal-cut lines **23** extending between seal lines **25** and the
26 edges of web **22**, and product is inserted into the open pouches formed thereby. After
27 product is inserted, web **22**, *i.e.*, the open pouches formed in web **22**, is sealed along its
28 edges. The pouch sections **24** are thereby sealed along their boundaries and, as seen best
29 in **FIG. 5**, define sealed volumes **28** in which product is disposed. Thereafter, the folded

1 and sealed web 22 is cut along seal-cut lines 23 to provide a plurality of individual
2 containers 20 having a top seal, bottom seal (proximate to the fold), and two side seals.

3 It will be appreciated that the container 20 thereby includes a message section 26
4 extending downward from the bottom seal of pouch 28. Perforations 29, as shown in
5 **FIG. 4**, may be provided at or near seal lines 25 to allow the message sections to be more
6 easily separable from the pouch 28. Alternatively, if perforations are not provided, the
7 message section may be torn or cut from the pouch 28 and a tear notch or imprinted cut
8 lines may be provided for such purposes.

9 As another example, and in accordance with a third preferred embodiment, the
10 novel pouch container is fabricated from a flexible imprintable substrate sheet comprising
11 a rectangular pouch section and a message section extending from a side edge thereof.
12 The substrate sheet is folded in half along a line passing through the pouch section and
13 the message section to provide two rectangular, overlaid folds. The boundaries of the
14 pouch section are sealed to define a generally rectangular-shaped sealed volume having a
15 top and side seals, the side seals being adjacent to the fold line. The message section
16 extends from a side seal of the sealed volume.

17 An example of this third preferred embodiment is shown in **FIGS. 7-9**, and like
18 the first and second preferred embodiments described above it also may be viewed as an
19 improvement on conventional pillow-shaped three-sided seal pouch containers. As will
20 be appreciated from **FIGS. 7-9**, container 30 comprises a single sheet 31 that preferably is
21 fabricated from a continuous web 32 providing a plurality of sheets 31 defined by seal-cut
22 lines 33. Each sheet 31 has a pouch section 34 bounded by seal-cut lines 33, seal lines
23 35, and the edges of web 32. Each sheet 31 also has a message section 36 bounded by
24 seal-cut lines 33, seal lines 35, and the edges of web 32.

25 Web 32 is folded along fold line 37 passing through pouch sections 34 and
26 message sections 36 such that the two halves thereof are generally overlaid and the
27 boundaries of the pouch sections 34 overlap. The folded web 32 is then sealed along
28 seal-cut lines 33 and along seal lines 35 and product is inserted into the open pouches
29 formed thereby in pouch sections 34. After product is inserted, web 32, *i.e.*, the open
30 pouches formed in web 32, is sealed along its edges, or at least those portions of the edges

1 of web 32 bounding the pouch sections 34. The pouch sections 34 are thereby sealed
2 along their boundaries and, as seen best in FIG. 8, define sealed volumes 38 in which
3 product is disposed. Thereafter, the folded and sealed web 32 is cut along seal-cut lines
4 33 to provide a plurality of individual containers 30 having a top seal and two side seals
5 (adjacent to the fold).

6 It will be appreciated that the container 30 thereby includes a message section 36
7 extending from a side seal of the pouch 38 adjacent to the fold line 37 therein.
8 Perforations 39, as shown in FIG. 7, may be provided at or near seal lines 35 to allow the
9 message sections to be more easily separable from the pouch 38. Alternatively, if
10 perforations are not provided, the message section may be torn or cut from the pouch 38
11 and a tear notch or imprinted cut lines may be provided for such purposes.

12 As yet another example, and in accordance with a fourth preferred embodiment,
13 the novel pouch container is fabricated from a flexible imprintable substrate sheet
14 comprising a single, rectangular pouch section and a message section extending from a
15 boundary thereof. The substrate sheet is folded along two longitudinal fold lines passing
16 through the pouch section parallel to the boundary from which the message section
17 extends to provide two rectangular folds overlaying a third rectangular fold. The
18 boundaries of the pouch section are sealed to define a generally rectangular-shaped sealed
19 volume having a seal extending across one face thereof and end seals. The message
20 section extends from the face seal of the pouch section.

21 An example of this fourth preferred embodiment is shown in FIGS. 10-12, and
22 may be viewed as an improvement on conventional pillow-shaped, wrap-style three-sided
23 seal pouch containers. As will be appreciated from FIGS. 10-12, container 40 comprises
24 a single sheet 41 that preferably is fabricated from a continuous web 42 providing a
25 plurality of sheets 41 defined by seal-cut lines 43 and the edges of web 42. Each sheet 41
26 has a pouch section 44 bounded by seal-cut lines 43 and seal lines 45. Each sheet 41 also
27 has two message sections 46 bounded by seal-cut lines 43, seal lines 45, and the edges of
28 web 42.

29 Web 42 is folded along longitudinal fold lines 47 passing through pouch sections
30 44 such that the two end portions of pouch section 44 generally overlay the middle

1 portion thereof and the boundaries of the pouch section **44** overlap. A longitudinal seal
2 then is applied along seal lines **45**, in what will become a face of the pouch, and a first
3 transverse seal is applied along a cut-seal line **43**. The cut-seal line **43** immediately
4 upstream from the sealed cut-seal line is left unsealed. In this manner an open pouch is
5 formed into which product is inserted. After product is inserted, the open pouch formed
6 in web **42** is sealed by forming a second transverse seal at the upstream cut-seal line **43**.
7 The pouch section **44** is thereby sealed along its boundaries and defines, as seen best in
8 **FIG. 11**, sealed volume **48** in which product is disposed. Finally, the folded and sealed
9 web **42** is cut just below the first formed, downstream transverse seal, thereby producing
10 an individual container **40** having a seal extending across one face of the container and
11 two end seals. This also leaves the longitudinally sealed web **42** with an open, unsealed
12 end. The process may be repeated to produce additional containers **40**.

13 It will be appreciated that the container **40** thereby includes two message sections
14 **46** extending from the face seal of pouch **48** and folded across the face thereof. As with
15 other embodiments described above, perforations **49**, as shown in **FIG. 10**, may be
16 provided between the message sections **46** and pouch **48** so that the message sections **46**
17 may be easily separated from the pouch **48**. Alternatively, if perforations are not
18 provided, the message sections may be torn or cut from the pouch **48** and a tear notch or
19 imprinted cut lines may be provided for such purposes.

20 As a further example, and in accordance with a fifth preferred embodiment, the
21 novel pouch container is fabricated from a flexible imprintable substrate sheet comprising
22 a single, rectangular pouch section and a message section extending from a transverse
23 side thereof. The substrate sheet is folded along two longitudinal fold lines passing
24 through the pouch section and the message section to provide two rectangular folds
25 overlaying a third rectangular fold. The longitudinal and transverse boundaries of the
26 pouch section are sealed to define a generally rectangular-shaped sealed volume having a
27 face seal and end seals. The message section extends from an end seal of the pouch
28 section.

29 An example of this fifth preferred embodiment is shown in **FIGS. 13-15**, and may
30 be viewed as an improvement on conventional pillow-shaped, wrap-style three-sided seal

1 pouch containers. As will be appreciated from **FIGS. 13-15**, container **50** comprises a
2 single sheet **51** that preferably is fabricated from a continuous web **52** providing a
3 plurality of sheets **51** defined by seal-cut lines **53** and the edges of web **52**. Each sheet **51**
4 has a pouch section **54** bounded by seal-cut lines **53**, seal lines **55**, and the edges of web
5 **52**. Each sheet **51** also has a message section **56** bounded by seal-cut lines **53**, seal lines
6 **55**, and the edges of web **52**.

7 Web **52** is folded along longitudinal fold lines **57** passing through pouch sections
8 **54** and message sections **56** such that the two end portions of pouch section **54** generally
9 overlay the middle portion thereof and the boundaries of the pouch sections **54** overlap.
10 A longitudinal seal then is applied along or proximate to the edges, and a first transverse
11 seal is applied along a cut-seal line **53**. The cut-seal line **53** immediately upstream from
12 the sealed cut-seal line is left unsealed. In this manner an open pouch is formed into
13 which product is inserted. After product is inserted, the open pouch formed in web **52** is
14 sealed by forming a second transverse seal at the upstream seal line **55**. The pouch
15 section **54** is thereby sealed along its boundaries and defines, as seen best in **FIG. 14**,
16 sealed volume **58** in which product is disposed. Finally, the folded and sealed web **52** is
17 cut just below the first formed, downstream transverse seal, thereby producing an
18 individual container **10** having a seal extending across one face of the container and two
19 end seals. This also leaves the longitudinally sealed web **52** with an open, unsealed end.
20 The process may be repeated to produce additional containers **10**.

21 It will be appreciated that the container **50** thereby includes a message section **56**
22 extending from an end seal of pouch **58**. As with other embodiments described above,
23 perforations **59**, as shown in **FIG. 13**, may be provided between the message section **56**
24 and pouch **58** so that the message section **56** may be easily separated from the pouch **58**.
25 Alternatively, if perforations are not provided, the message section may be torn or cut
26 from the pouch **58** and a tear notch or imprinted cut lines may be provided for such
27 purposes.

28 Various other preferred embodiments of the novel invention include a product
29 packaged in a pouch container comprising two flexible imprintable substrate sheets.
30 Each of the substrate sheets comprises a pouch section. At least one of the substrate

1 sheets also comprises a message section adjacent to the pouch section thereon. The
2 pouch sections of the substrate sheets are superimposed such that their boundaries overlap
3 and are sealed to define a sealed volume accommodating the product with the message
4 section extending from a sealed boundary of the pouch section. The message section
5 provides a substrate on which an advertising message may be imprinted and viewed by a
6 consumer of the product. It is separable from the pouch section and the sealed volume
7 defined thereby without compromising the integrity of the sealed volume.

8 An example thereof, and a sixth preferred embodiment of the subject invention is
9 shown in **FIGS. 16-18**. It may be viewed as an improvement on conventional pillow-
10 shaped four-sided seal pouch containers. As will be appreciated from **FIGS. 16-18**,
11 container **60** comprises two sheets **61** that preferably are fabricated from a continuous
12 web **62** providing a plurality of sheets **61** defined by seal-cut lines **63**. Each sheet **61** has
13 a pouch section **64** bounded by seal-cut lines **63**, seal line **65**, and an edge of the web **62**.
14 Each sheet **61** also has a message section **66** bounded by seal-cut lines **63**, seal line **65**,
15 and the other edge of web **62**.

16 A pair of webs **62** are superimposed such that the boundaries of the pouch
17 sections **64** thereon overlap. The webs **62** are then sealed along seal-cut lines **63** and seal
18 line **65** and product is inserted into the open pouches formed thereby. After product is
19 inserted, webs **62**, *i.e.*, the open pouches formed in webs **62**, are sealed along the edge of
20 the webs **62**. The pouch sections **64** are thereby sealed along their boundaries and, as
21 seen best in **FIG. 17**, define sealed volumes **68** in which product is disposed. Thereafter,
22 the sealed webs **62** are cut along seal-cut lines **63** to provide a plurality of individual
23 containers **60** having four side seals.

24 It will be appreciated that the container **60** thereby includes two message sections
25 **66** extending from a seal in pouch **68**. Perforations **69**, as shown in **FIG. 16**, may be
26 provided at or near seal lines **65** to allow the message sections to be more easily separable
27 from the pouch **68**. Alternatively, if perforations are not provided, the message sections
28 may be torn or cut from the pouch **68** and a tear notch or imprinted cut lines may be
29 provided for such purposes.

1 While containers **10, 20, 30, 40, 50, and 60**, each comprise two message sections
2 extending from a seal therein, it will be appreciated that similar containers may be
3 fabricated that have only one such message section. Moreover, while the description
4 above generally contemplates that the message sections in those containers are connected
5 to their respective seals, if desired, the message sections also may be affixed to each
6 other, *e.g.*, by applying a seal or adhesive during the process of forming, filling, and
7 sealing the containers.

8 Various other preferred embodiments of the novel invention include a product
9 packaged in a pouch container comprising one or two pouch sheets. The pouch sheets are
10 composed of a flexible imprintable substrate and define a sealed volume accommodating
11 the product. The container also comprises a message sheet composed of an imprintable
12 substrate. The message sheet is affixed to at least one of the pouch sheets on an exterior
13 surface thereof. It provides a substrate on which an advertising message may be
14 imprinted and viewed by a consumer of the product. The message sheet is separable from
15 the pouch sheets and the sealed volume defined thereby without compromising the
16 integrity of the sealed volume.

17 For example, and in accordance with a seventh preferred embodiment, the novel
18 pouch container is fabricated from a single pouch sheet. The pouch sheet is folded such
19 that portions thereof overlay each other and the overlaid portions are sealed at the
20 boundaries thereof to define a sealed volume accommodating the product therein and
21 having front and back exterior faces. A message sheet is affixed to a face of the sealed
22 volume.

23 As example of this seventh preferred embodiment is shown in **FIGS. 19-22**, and
24 may be viewed as an improvement on conventional pillow-shaped three-sided seal pouch
25 containers. As will be appreciated from **FIGS. 19, 20 and 22**, container **70** comprises a
26 pouch sheet **71** that preferably is fabricated from a continuous web **72** providing a
27 plurality of pouch sheets **71** defined by seal-cut lines **73**. Container **70** also comprises a
28 message sheet **74** that preferably is fabricated from a continuous web **75** providing a
29 plurality of message sheets **74** defined by cut lines **76** shown in **FIG. 21**.

1 Pouch web **72** is folded along longitudinal fold line **77** passing through pouch
2 sheets **71** such that the two halves thereof are generally overlaid and the boundaries of the
3 pouch sheets **71** overlap. The folded web **72** is then sealed along seal-cut lines **73**, and
4 message web **75** is affixed thereto with cut-lines **76** in register with cut-seal lines **73**.
5 Product is inserted into the open pouches formed thereby. After product is inserted,
6 pouch web **72**, *i.e.*, the open pouches formed in web **72**, is sealed along the edges thereof.
7 The pouch sections **71** are thereby sealed along their boundaries and, as seen best in **FIG.**
8 **20**, define sealed volumes **78** in which product is disposed. Thereafter, the folded pouch
9 web **72** with the message web **75** affixed thereto is cut along seal-cut lines **73** and cut
10 lines **76** to provide a plurality of individual containers **70** having a top seal and two side
11 seals.

12 It will be appreciated that the container **70** thereby includes a message sheet **74**
13 affixed to one of the faces of pouch **78**. A tab may be provided on message sheets **74** to
14 facilitate the separation thereof from the pouch **78**. Also, it is not necessary that the
15 message sheet **74** be affixed to the pouch **78** continuously across their abutting surfaces,
16 and it may be preferable to leave a portion of the message sheet unbonded to enable the
17 message sheet to be more easily peeled off and removed.

18 As a further example, and in accordance with an eighth preferred embodiment, the
19 novel pouch container is fabricated from one pouch sheet. The pouch sheet is folded
20 along two longitudinal fold lines such that the boundaries thereof overlay each other. The
21 overlaid portions of the boundaries are sealed to define a sealed volume accommodating
22 the product therein and having front and back exterior faces. A message sheet is affixed
23 to a face of the sealed volume.

24 An example of this eighth preferred embodiment is shown in **FIGS. 23-26**, and
25 may be viewed as an improvement on conventional pillow-shaped three-sided seal
26 “wrap” pouch containers. As will be appreciated from **FIGS. 23, 24** and **26**, container **80**
27 comprises a pouch sheet **81** that preferably is fabricated from a continuous web **82**
28 providing a plurality of pouch sheets **81** defined by seal-cut lines **83**. Container **80** also
29 comprises a message sheet **84** that preferably is fabricated from a continuous web **85**
30 providing a plurality of message sheets **84** defined by cut lines **86** shown in **FIG. 25**.

1 Pouch web **82** is folded along longitudinal fold lines **87** passing through pouch
2 sheets **81** such that the two end portions of the pouch sheets **81** generally overlay the
3 middle portion thereof and the boundaries of the pouch sheets **81** overlap. A longitudinal
4 seal then is applied along or proximate to the edges, and message web **85** is affixed to
5 pouch web **82** with cut-lines **86** in register with cut-seal lines **83**. A first transverse seal is
6 applied along a cut-seal line **83**, and the cut-seal line **83** immediately upstream from the
7 sealed cut-seal line is left unsealed. In this manner an open pouch is formed into which
8 product is inserted. After product is inserted, the open pouch formed in web **82** is sealed
9 by forming a second transverse seal at the upstream seal-cut line **83**. The pouch sheet **81**
10 **84** is thereby sealed along its boundaries and defines, as seen best in **FIG. 24**, sealed
11 volume **88** in which product is disposed. Finally, the folded and sealed web **82** with
12 message web **85** affixed thereto is cut just below the first formed, downstream transverse
13 seal, thereby producing an individual container **80** having a seal extending across one face
14 of the container and two end seals. This also leaves the longitudinally sealed web **82** with
15 an open, unsealed end. The process may be repeated to produce additional containers **80**.

16 It will be appreciated that the container **80** thereby includes a message sheet **84**
17 affixed to one face of the pouch **88**. A tab may be provided on message sheets **84** to
18 facilitate the separation thereof from the pouch **88**. Also, it is not necessary that the
19 message sheet **84** be affixed to the pouch **88** continuously across their abutting surfaces,
20 and it may be preferable to leave a portion of the message sheet unbonded to enable the
21 message sheet to be more easily peeled off and removed.

22 While containers **70** and **80** comprise, respectively, a single message sheet **74** and
23 **84**, it will be appreciated that the subject invention encompasses containers having
24 message sheets on both faces of a pouch container. Moreover, multiple message sheets
25 may be provided on a single face by, *e.g.*, by laminating or otherwise affixing multiple
26 message sheets together and affixing one of the sheets to the face of the container.

27 Various other preferred embodiments of the novel invention include a product
28 packaged in a pouch container comprising one or two pouch sheets. The pouch sheets are
29 composed of a flexible imprintable substrate and define a sealed volume accommodating
30 the product. At least one of the pouch sheets is comprised by a laminate sheet comprising

1 the pouch sheet and a message sheet. The message sheet is composed of an imprintable
2 substrate, and it provides a substrate on which an advertising message may be imprinted
3 and viewed by a consumer of the product. The message sheet is separable from the
4 laminate sheet and the sealed volume defined thereby without compromising the integrity
5 of the sealed volume.

6 For example, and in accordance with a ninth preferred embodiment, the novel
7 pouch container is fabricated from a laminate sheet comprising a pouch sheet and a
8 message sheet. The laminate sheet is folded such that the boundaries of the pouch sheet
9 overlap and are sealed to define a sealed volume accommodating the product. The
10 message sheet is exterior to the pouch sheet and, therefore, may be removed from the
11 pouch without compromising the integrity of the sealed volume.

12 An example of this ninth preferred embodiment is shown in **FIGS. 27-29**, and
13 may be viewed as an improvement on conventional pillow-shaped three-sided seal pouch
14 containers. As will be appreciated from **FIGS. 27-29**, container **90** comprises a laminate
15 sheet **91** that preferably is fabricated from a continuous web **92** providing a plurality of
16 laminate sheets **91** defined by seal-cut lines **93**. Each laminate sheet **91** comprises a
17 pouch sheet **94** and a message sheet **95**.

18 Laminate web **92** is folded along longitudinal fold line **97** passing through
19 laminate sheets **91** such that the two halves thereof are generally overlaid and the
20 boundaries of the pouch sheets **94** overlap. The folded laminate web **92** is then sealed
21 along seal-cut lines **93**, and product is inserted into the open pouches formed thereby.
22 After product is inserted, laminate web **92**, *i.e.*, the open pouches formed in laminate web
23 **92**, is sealed along the edges thereof. The pouch sheets **94** in laminate sheet **91** are
24 thereby sealed along their boundaries and, as seen best in **FIG. 28**, define sealed volumes
25 **98** in which product is disposed. Thereafter, the folded laminate web **92** is cut along seal-
26 cut lines **93** to provide a plurality of individual containers **90** having a top seal and two
27 side seals.

28 It will be appreciated that the container **90** thereby includes a message sheet **95**
29 affixed to the exterior surface of the pouch **98**. A tab may be provided on message sheets
30 **95** to facilitate the separation thereof from the laminate sheet **91**. Alternatively, it may be

1 preferable to leave a portion of the message sheet unbonded to the laminate sheet **91** so
2 that the message sheet **95** may be peeled off more easily.

3 For example, and in accordance with a tenth preferred embodiment, the novel
4 pouch container is fabricated from two pouch sheets, at least one of which is comprised
5 by a laminate sheet comprising the pouch sheet and a message sheet. The pouch sheets
6 are superimposed such that the boundaries of the pouch sheets overlap and are sealed to
7 define a sealed volume accommodating the product. The message sheet is exterior to the
8 pouch sheet and, therefore, may be removed from the pouch without compromising the
9 integrity of the sealed volume.

10 An example of this tenth preferred embodiment is shown in **FIGS. 30-32**, and
11 may be viewed as an improvement on conventional pillow-shaped four-sided seal pouch
12 containers. As will be appreciated from **FIGS. 30-32**, container **100** comprises two
13 laminate sheets **101** that preferably are fabricated from continuous webs **102** providing a
14 plurality of laminate sheets **101** defined by seal-cut lines **103**. Each laminate sheet **101**
15 comprises a pouch sheet **104** and a message sheet **105**.

16 A pair of laminate webs **102** are superimposed such that the boundaries of the
17 pouch sheets **104** thereon overlap. The laminate webs **102** that are sealed along seal-cut
18 lines **103** and one edge thereof, and product is inserted into the open pouches formed
19 thereby. After product is inserted, laminate webs **102**, *i.e.*, the open pouches formed in
20 laminate webs **102**, are sealed along the other edges thereof. The pouch sheets **104** in
21 laminate sheets **101** are thereby sealed along their boundaries and, as seen best in **FIG.**
22 **31**, define sealed volumes **108** in which product is disposed. Thereafter, the sealed
23 laminate webs **102** are cut along seal-cut lines **103** to provide a plurality of individual
24 containers **100** having four side seals.

25 It will be appreciated that the container **100** thereby includes a message sheet **105**
26 affixed to both exterior surfaces of the pouch **108**. A tab may be provided on message
27 sheets **105** to facilitate the separation thereof from the laminate sheets **101**. Alternatively,
28 it may be preferable to leave a portion of the message sheets unbonded to the laminate
29 sheets **101** so that the message sheets **105** may be peeled off more easily.

1 Container **100** is fabricated from two laminate sheets, but it is not necessary to do
2 so. Novel containers may be fabricated from a pouch sheet and a single laminate sheet,
3 thereby providing a message sheet on only one face of a container. Also, while containers
4 **90** and **100** comprise, respectively, laminate sheets **91** and **101** having a single message
5 sheet **95** and **105**, it will be appreciated that the subject invention encompasses containers
6 comprising laminate sheets with more than one message sheet. Thus, multiple message
7 sheets may be provided on one or both faces of a container. In addition, as will become
8 apparent from the discussion that follows, the pouch sheet and message sheet in a
9 laminate sheet used in the novel containers may themselves be a laminated substrate.

10 In general, the novel containers may be used to package the same types of
11 products that are packaged in conventional pouch containers. Such products include, but
12 are not limited to food products, such as sugar, sugar substitutes, salt, salt substitutes,
13 pepper and other seasonings, candy, coffee, tea, drink mixes, freeze pops, ketchup,
14 mayonnaise, mustard, sauces, salad dressing, relish, vinegar, lemon juice, honey, jellies
15 and jams, crackers, breadsticks, croutons, bacon bits and other condiments, chemical
16 products, such as fertilizers, adhesives, fillers, and household cleaning and laundry
17 products, pharmaceuticals, such as vitamins, nutritional supplements, and medicines,
18 cosmetics and health care products, such as creams, ointments, and lotions, towelettes,
19 and dentifrices, medical products, such as catheters, sutures, syringes, swab sticks,
20 lancets, and surgical gloves, and small parts. Such products may be in, but are not limited
21 to the form of solids, powders, granules, tablets, liquids, semi-viscous liquids, pastes,
22 gels, and gases.

23 While the novel pouch containers may be used to package a wide variety of
24 products, they are particularly suitable for packaging single-serve products, and especially
25 single-serve food products. Many single-serve food products are distributed in large part
26 to consumers in food service establishments. In such settings consumers often have more
27 time available for viewing advertisements. It is expected, therefore, that advertising
28 messages carried on the novel containers would be more effective when the product is a
29 single-serve food product or other product that is consumed or used under circumstances
30 affording consumers with significant time to examine the package.

1 In general, the novel pouches for particular products preferably are made of
2 materials and processes that would be used in packaging the product in conventional
3 pouch packages. Importantly, depending on the product and the manner in which it is
4 consumed, the materials also may be required to meet certain regulatory standards
5 relating to health and safety, such as laws and regulations implemented and enforced by
6 the United States Food and Drug Administration, Consumer Product Safety Commission,
7 and other governmental and industry organizations. It will be appreciated that the novel
8 containers, since they may be fabricated from standard and approved materials, provide a
9 medium for advertising without diminishing the safety of the packaging.

10 More specifically, the substrate sheets used in the construction of the novel
11 containers in general may be composed of any of a wide variety of imprintable substrates
12 conventionally used in pouch packaging. Such substrates include paper, such as bond and
13 machine glazed, cellophane, and other synthetic or natural nonwoven fibrous substrates,
14 monolayer and coextruded films, such as those composed of high and low density
15 polyethylene, polypropylene, ethylene vinyl alcohol, polyester, nylon, and other polymers,
16 and aluminum and other metallic alloys, and paper-film and other laminate substrates.
17 Suitable films will enable the imprinting of an advertising message. They also should
18 have tear, tensile, stiffness, memory, and other physical characteristics that render them
19 suitable for use in automated printing and packaging equipment. For many solid and
20 powdered products, bond, book, and other types of paper based stock are preferred as they
21 are relatively inexpensive, suitable for use in food products, may be handled relatively
22 easily by automated equipment, and provide an excellent substrate for conventional
23 printing processes. Machine glazed paper is especially preferred as it will provide
24 improved print quality. Films and film laminate substrates are preferred for the same
25 reasons when the product to be packaged is a liquid or viscous composition. Importantly,
26 if the packaged product is a food product or other product intended for consumption, and
27 the substrate will come in sufficiently close contact therewith, the substrate must be
28 suitable for use in food products, and most preferably is approved by the U.S. Food and
29 Drug Administration for such use.

1 In general, the choice of material for the substrate sheets will be determined by
2 those and other factors well known to those skilled in the art of packaging, and many
3 suitable substrates are commercially available. Typically, the substrate sheets used in the
4 novel containers for a particular product will be the same types of substrate sheets used to
5 package that product in conventional pouch packages. The sheets used to construct the
6 novel containers also may be made from the same substrate or different substrates.

7 The sheets used to fabricate the novel containers are preferably coated or spotted
8 in appropriate locations with a heat sealable adhesive, such as those composed of
9 polyethylene and other thermoplastic polymers. Alternately, many films suitable for use
10 as substrates, such as low density polyethylene (LDPE), are heat sealable. Pressure
11 sensitive adhesives also are an alternative. In general, any suitable method of forming the
12 necessary seals may be used. As with the other materials, however, if the containers are
13 for food products, the adhesive or other method of sealing the sheets preferably is suitable
14 for use in association with food products as approved by the U.S. Food and Drug
15 Administration. Typically, the materials and methods for sealing the substrate sheets in
16 novel containers for a particular product will be the same materials and methods used to
17 package that product in conventional pouch packages.

18 The advertising message may be imprinted by any of a number of conventional
19 printing processes well known to workers in the art. It will be further appreciated, that in
20 the context of the subject invention, imprinting will be understood not only to include
21 such printing processes, but also impressing, watermarking, bonding, fusing, embossing,
22 burning, stenciling and other processes by which indicia may be imparted to the substrate
23 to communicate the desired advertising message that are suitable for use in association
24 with food products. The precise method of imprinting will be coordinated with the
25 choice of substrate, and vice versa. Printing the advertising message, however, is
26 preferred for cost reasons and because it allows great flexibility in presenting the
27 advertising message. Soy based inks and other inks approved by the U.S. Food and Drug
28 Administration for use in association with food products may be preferable or, under
29 some circumstances, required by law. Preferably the advertising messages are preprinted

1 on a suitable web prior to packaging. However, exterior or “show” sides of the packaging
2 may be printed using noncontact methods, such as ink jet.

3 The advertising message, of course, will be determined by the advertiser. It will
4 be appreciated, however, that when the message includes a manufacturer coupon
5 redeemable by a consumer, it will be advisable to select substrates and imprinting
6 methods that provide relatively high quality printing. That will improve machine
7 readability of the bar code that as a practical matter must be associated with a
8 manufacturer coupon.

9 It also will be appreciated that while described as pouch sections or sheets, the
10 pouch portion of the novel container typically will also have an imprinted message on at
11 least its exterior surface. In many instances, such messages will provide identification
12 and information on the product that is contained in the package. Such product
13 information will most commonly be imprinted on the pouch portion of containers such as
14 containers **10**, **20**, and **30**, where message sections do not cover the pouch. In other
15 embodiments, such as containers **90** and **100**, message sheets may have product
16 information imprinted on the exterior faces thereof, and advertising messages imprinted
17 on the interior faces and on the exterior faces of the pouch sheets. Moreover, although
18 the novel containers are particularly useful in disseminating advertising messages other
19 than those pertaining to the packaged product, all messages imprinted thereon may
20 pertain to the packaged product.

21 The novel containers all provide imprintable media which are connected to a
22 pouch enclosing a product, but are separable therefrom without opening the pouch. In
23 certain embodiments, such as container **10**, the imprintable message section extends from
24 a seal and is integral with the sheet from which the container is made. It is removed by
25 tearing or cutting. In other embodiments, such as containers **70** and **90**, the message sheet
26 is affixed to the pouch and is peeled therefrom. It may be affixed, *e.g.*, by suitable
27 releasable adhesives well known to workers in the art, such as low tack, peelable
28 adhesives. As with the other materials, however, if the containers are for food products,
29 the adhesive preferably is suitable for use in association with food products and such as

1 those adhesives approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Any suitable
2 methods for removeably connecting films, however, may be used.

3 Also, while the message sheet in container 90, for example, is affixed to the pouch
4 sheet by lamination, *i.e.*, by applying a substantially continuous layer of adhesive
5 extending across the entire opposing faces thereof, it is not necessary, and may not even
6 be desirable to do so. The adhesive may be applied discontinuously, *e.g.*, in spots or
7 lines. For example, the substantial portion of laminate sheet may be laminated together,
8 but areas near the edges of the sheets may be left free of adhesive to facilitate separation
9 of message sheets by a consumer. Also, message sheets may be affixed to a pouch at only
10 one end thereof, so as to make it readily apparent to the consumer that it may be removed.

11 It also will be appreciated that while all of the novel containers specifically
12 described comprise a single pouch, joined twin and triple packs having, respectively, two
13 and three pouches attached together are known, as are packs with more pouches.
14 Accordingly, the subject invention is not limited to containers having a single pouch.
15 Multiple pouch containers having advertising media as described herein are also within
16 the scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

17 Also, while the illustrated embodiments all have a generally rectangular or
18 "pillow" shape, the subject invention is not limited thereto. Pillow shaped pouches are
19 preferred for many products because they efficiently utilize material and may be made
20 relatively easily. The subject invention, however, is not limited to pillow shaped pouch
21 containers. Pouches having other shapes are known or may be devised and may be used
22 in accordance with the subject invention. Other shapes include, but are not limited to,
23 gusset bottom and stand-up pouch containers. Other pouch containers, such as those used
24 to package liquids and other viscous products, often have a nipple for easier dispensing of
25 the product. In general, the shape of the pouch portion of the novel containers preferably
26 will approximate the shape of conventional pouch containers used to package a particular
27 product.

28 Likewise, the novel containers are not limited to any particular size, but the pouch
29 portion of the novel containers also preferably will approximate the size and dimensions
30 of conventional pouch containers used to package the same product. It will be

1 appreciated, however, that the novel containers have particular utility when a relatively
2 small pouch is desired, as such pouch containers heretofore have been extremely limited
3 in providing adequate space for advertising messages.

4 In particular, the novel containers are particularly suitable for packaging single-
5 serve products, and especially single-serve food products. Single-serve products are
6 generally understood to include products that are packaged in quantities suitable for
7 immediate use or consumption. Thus, packaging for single-serve products typically are
8 not resealable, as such products typically are opened, the entire quantity consumed or
9 used, and the packaging discarded. Accordingly, the amount of product in single-serve
10 products, and the packaging for single-serve products is relatively small. The novel
11 pouch containers, because they provide significantly greater imprintable area, may be
12 quite small, yet still serve a medium for distributing advertising messages.

13 As with the pouch section, the message section of the novel containers is not
14 limited to a particular size. Moreover, it will be appreciated that the novel pouch
15 containers have significantly greater imprintable area, yet they do not occupy significantly
16 more space. Those containers having a message section affixed to a face of the pouch
17 section are not significantly thicker than the filled pouch alone. The dimensions of the
18 message area preferably will approximate the dimensions of a pouch face, such as shown
19 in container **70**, or both pouch faces, such as shown in containers **90** and **100**, so that the
20 message area may be maximized. Where it is desired to leave a portion of the carrying
21 face of the pouch section exposed, for example as shown in container **80**, it still may be
22 desirable to have the longitudinal dimension of the message section the same as that of
23 the pouch section so that fabrication of the package is facilitated.

24 For containers such as containers **10**, **20**, **30**, **40**, **50**, and **60**, the message sections
25 may be folded one or more times over onto the face of the package, thus rendering the
26 container just slightly thicker than, but with essentially the same dimensions as a pouch
27 container that does not have a message section. Preferably, the size of the message area
28 will be sized to maximize the imprintable area for a given number of folds that are
29 formed between the message section and the pouch section. The message section in a
30 container such as container **10**, for example, preferably has the same approximate

1 dimensions as the dimensions of the face of the container so that it may be folded neatly
2 over the face, yet provide the maximum imprintable area without having the message
3 section extend beyond the edges of the pouch or without requiring an additional fold in
4 the message section. If an extra fold is provided therein, such that the message area is
5 folded twice over the same face or around both faces, the message area preferably will
6 have twice the area of the pouch face and sized such that it neatly covers the face or faces
7 thereof. Similarly, the area of the message section in containers such as container 40, will
8 be sized such that it covers one half the face of the pouch section or otherwise such that
9 the ends thereof coincide with an edge of the pouch section. This provides a neater
10 package while maximizing the imprintable area on the message section. The folded
11 message section, if desired, may be lightly tacked or otherwise affixed to a face of the
12 pouch section to hold it in place.

13 This is a significant advantage as many single-serve products, especially those
14 distributed through food service establishments, are dispensed in holders designed to
15 accommodate certain, more or less standardized package sizes. The novel containers may
16 be sized according to such conventions, yet still provide significantly larger areas for
17 imprinting messages.

18 This advantage is even greater as the size of the container is diminished. Many
19 single-serve products may be distributed under circumstances affording a consumer a
20 relatively greater opportunity to view advertising messages. Again, single-serve products
21 distributed through food service establishments provide a good example, as consumers
22 often have considerable time to peruse such products while they wait for their food.
23 Given the size of their containers, however, many single-serve products, such as sugar
24 and other condiments, generally have only a small area available for imprinting a
25 message.

26 For example, conventional single-serve sugar and sugar-substitutes typically are
27 packaged in three-side and four-side seal pouch containers measuring approximately
28 1.75" by 3.75", or less, or in wrap-style pouch containers measuring approximately 0.75"
29 by 4.5", or less, thereby providing less than about 13.1 in² of imprintable area on the faces
30 of the pouches. Single-serve ketchup, mustard, and other sauces and condiments

1 typically are packaged in three-side and four-side seal pouch containers measuring
2 approximately 2.0" by 3.75", or less, thereby providing less than about 15.0 in² of
3 imprintable area. Single serve crackers typically are packaged in wrap-style pouch
4 containers measuring approximately 2.5" by 4", or less, with an imprintable area of less
5 than 20 in². Pouch containers of such sizes have very limited imprintable area and are
6 poorly suited to much more than very simple branding messages, such as an advertisers'
7 name, slogan, or logo.

8 In particular, as a practical matter it is impossible to provide a redeemable
9 manufacturer coupon on many such pouch containers because of size constraints. A
10 manufacturer typically will include a bar code that is machine readable and used in
11 systems that manage accounting between a coupon issuer and a merchant who honors the
12 coupon. The size of such bar codes must be sufficiently large so that it may be easily and
13 accurately read, but in doing so, there is little or no room left on a traditional message slip
14 to associate an advertising message with the bar code.

15 In contrast, the novel containers may be fabricated with pouches having sizes
16 essentially the same as conventional containers, but with significantly greater imprintable
17 area because they comprise a message section as well. For example, packaging sugar in
18 novel packets such as container 10 with conventionally sized 3 or 4-side seal pouch can
19 provide 50% more imprintable area by providing a single message section about half the
20 size of the pouch face. Alternately, the same container may be provided with two
21 message sections each having approximately the same dimensions as the face of the
22 pouch section. Thus, the message sections would provide four imprintable faces and
23 ample room for even two redeemable manufacture coupons. One face of each message
24 section could be used for imprinting an advertising message that will inform a consumer
25 of the basic terms of the coupon, and the other face for imprinting a suitable bar code. At
26 the same time, because the message sections may be folded over the pouch, the novel
27 container occupies very little more space than conventional sugar packs and may be
28 dispensed in containers used to dispense conventional sugar packs.

29 Other examples are set forth in Table 1. Table 1 shows the increase in imprintable
30 area that is provided for by the novel containers in various preferred sizes and

1 configurations where the pouch is either a 3 or 4-sided seal ("Standard") or a 3-sided seal
2 wrap-style ("Wrap) with message sections being either one half, equal to, or twice the
3 size of a face of the pouch.

4 Table 1

Pouch Style	Pouch Face Dimensions (in x in)	Pouch Face Imprintable Area (in ²)	Number of Message Sections	Message Section Imprintable Area (PF Imprintable Area)	Total Imprintable Area (in ²)	Increase in Imprintable Area (%)
Standard	1.75 x 3.75	13.1	1	0.5	19.7	50
Standard	1.75 x 3.75	13.1	1	1.0	26.2	100
Standard	1.75 x 3.75	13.1	2	1.0	39.4	200
Standard	1.75 x 3.75	13.1	1	2.0	39.4	200
Standard	2 x 3.75	15.0	1	0.5	22.5	50
Standard	2 x 3.75	15.0	1	1.0	30.0	100
Standard	2 x 3.75	15.0	2	1.0	45.0	200
Standard	2 x 3.75	15.0	1	2.0	45.0	200
Wrap	2.5 x 4	20.0	1	0.5	30.0	50
Wrap	2.5 x 4	20.0	2	0.5	40.0	100
Wrap	2.5 x 4	20.0	2	1.0	60.0	200

5
6 Preferably the bar code imprinted on the message section meets standards for
7 UPC bar codes utilizing the UCC/EAN-128 Article Numbering System as are known in
8 the industry, but other information may be encoded therein. It also will be appreciated
9 that other machine readable indicia may be provided in association with the coupon or
10 other advertising message, such as suitably encoded magnetic media films, provided they
11 are acceptable for use in association with food products.

12 Moreover, in conventional pouch containers, the pouch and whatever advertising
13 message may be imprinted thereon is considered trash once the pouch is opened. When
14 the product is a liquid, paste or any other product that leaves a residue, the consumer may
15 take great pains to avoid further contact with the pouch. The novel containers, however,
16 provide a message area that is never in contact with the product and which is separable

1 from the pouch without opening the pouch. Thus, the consumer is provided with, for
2 example, a neat clean coupon that he or she may eventually redeem, all without
3 encountering any messy residues.

4 It also will be appreciated that the novel containers may be produced by making
5 relatively minor modifications to conventional processes and machinery for making
6 pouch containers. Such machinery includes horizontal and vertical form, fill and seal
7 machinery for packaging a variety of products and manufactures of such equipment
8 include Winkpak Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, Prodo-Pak Corporation, Garfield,
9 New Jersey, U.S.A., Circle Packaging Machinery Inc., Green Bay, Wisconsin, U.S.A.;
10 Cloud L.L.C., Des Plaines, Illinois, U.S.A.; Ropak Manufacturing Company, Inc.,
11 Decatur, Alabama, U.S.A.

12 The methods of the subject invention are directed to disseminating advertising
13 messages to consumers. The novel methods comprise packaging a product in a pouch
14 container having an advertising message associated therewith which may be viewed by a
15 consumer, the pouch container being one of the novel pouch containers. That is, the
16 containers are selected from the group consisting of the novel containers described herein
17 or any subgroup thereof. The packaged product with the advertising message is
18 distributed to a consumer outlet and then distributed to consumers associated with the
19 consumer outlet. The advertising message is thereby distributed to consumers of the
20 product.

21 It is especially preferred that the novel pouch containers be used to distribute
22 single-serve food products distributed to consumer outlets such as restaurants,
23 concessions, institutions, and other food service establishments. It will be appreciated
24 that consumers in such outlets often have a greater opportunity to view advertising
25 messages while they wait for and consume food. It is expected, therefore, that the view
26 rates for messages distributed via the novel methods will be significantly greater than
27 view rates for other types of direct advertising.

28 The subject invention also provides for novel methods for packaging and
29 distributing products for dissemination to a target consumer group. Those methods
30 comprise packing a product in a pouch container having associated therewith an

1 advertising message pertaining to products or services other than the packaged product,
2 the advertising message being intended for a target consumer group. The packaged
3 product then is packaged in a shipping carton having a machine readable indicator
4 uniquely associated with the advertising message. The indicator then is read and, in
5 response to the reading, the carton containing the packaged product is shipped to
6 consumer outlets associated with the target consumer group. The advertising message
7 then may be disseminated to the target consumer group through the consumer outlets.

8 The novel methods are particularly suitable for distributing single-serve food
9 products packaged in the novel pouch containers through restaurants, concessions,
10 institutions and other food service establishments. Consumers in such establishments
11 typically have a greater opportunity to view advertisements while they are waiting for or
12 consuming their food. It is expected, therefore, that such advertising campaigns will have
13 relatively higher view and response rates as compared to many conventional direct
14 advertising methods.

15 For example, an advertiser may wish to limit its campaign to consumers in a
16 specific geographical area or associated with specific types of consumer outlets. A code
17 or other indicator may be assigned to that message and stored in a machine readable
18 format or medium which is printed, affixed, or otherwise associated with the shipping
19 carton for products containing the advertiser's message. The indicator then may be read
20 so that the product will be shipped only to consumer outlets in the geographic area or of
21 the particular type targeted by the advertiser.

22 The shipping cartons may be any carton suitable for shipping the packaged
23 product and many such cartons are known and currently in use. Likewise, the machine
24 readable indicator, and the apparatus for reading such indicators, may be selected from
25 any such systems as are known in the art. For example, the indicator could be a bar code
26 readable by conventional bar code readers. Alternately, the indicator could be text or
27 numerical code that may be scanned and interpreted by conventional scan readers. The
28 indicator also could be encoded on a microchip, magnetic strip, or other media for
29 recording data. Other systems for storing and reading an indicator are known and may be
30 used if desired.

1 It will be appreciated, therefore, that the novel methods allow for efficient and
2 effective dissemination of advertising messages to targeted consumers.

3 While this invention has been disclosed and discussed primarily in terms of
4 specific embodiments thereof, it is not intended to be limited thereto. Other
5 modifications and embodiments will be apparent to the worker in the art.

6